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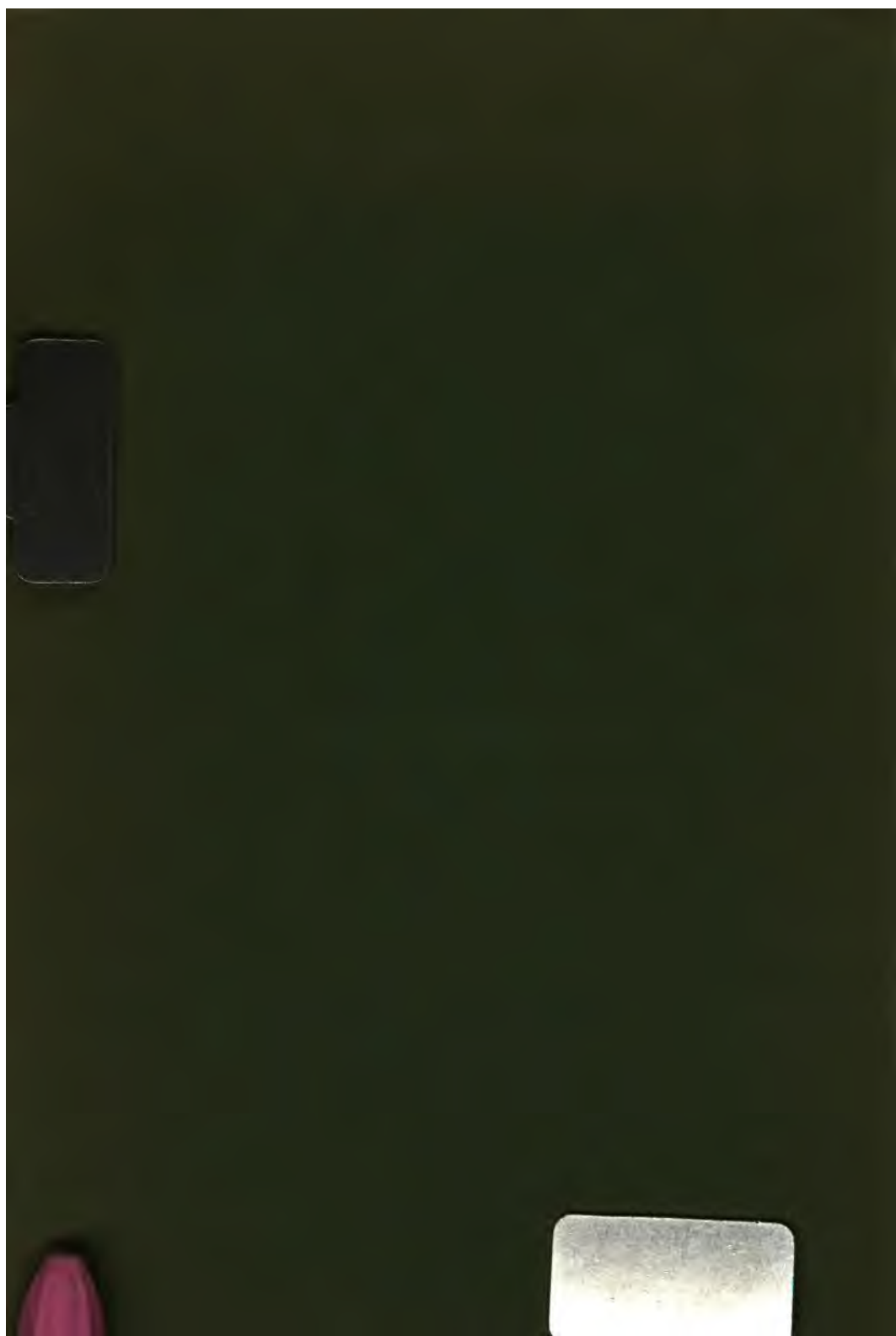
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# **THE GOAL**

**A PLAY IN TWO ACTS**

**BY**

**RAYMOND WYER**

**1915**

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## INTRODUCTION

### Germany's Explanations

The variety of statements made by Germans these days is surprising. One recently tried for two hours to convince me that there is no such thing as Prussian militarism, and that Germany is not even a military nation.

As a matter of fact, the war attitude of the average German is delightfully inconsistent. He is a mass of contradictions. He is as vague and unconvincing in his explanation of the various incidents and phases of the conflict as are the numerous official and unofficial reports from Berlin fixing the responsibility for the war. He is always explaining, always claiming that his country is misunderstood; yet he never really enucleates anything, a fact which is pretty sound evidence that he has a doubtful case. He tells you that Germany is going to win, but gives you no reason; he simply says that Germany will win because she must. Right down in his heart his belief is based on the knowledge that Germany's preparation for this war has been controlled by a thoroughness which has never been approached in the history of military organization.

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## INTRODUCTION

If you say to a German, "Germany started this war," he retorts that the sword was put into her hands. If you say, "The Allies are going to win," he tries, by expatiating on Germany's far-sighted preparedness and her wonderful military organization, to prove that this is impossible.

I feel very sorry for the German because I am sure that he would much prefer to be honest and boldly say: "Look at us! Has there ever been a more wonderful army? With this organization we are going to whip the world." But he cannot say this; for the world has ideals, and the ideals of to-day do not go hand in hand with the sword. He must, for the sake of appearances, therefore, deny Germany's military genius.

The German machine and those responsible for its perfection have rendered that nation incapable of expressing itself through channels in tune with the intellectual standard of today. With all the terrible outcome of the war, however, Germany is the victim of a miscalculation, rather than of anything fundamentally vicious in her character. She has done much for the culture of the world. Her success made her ambitious; then her technique went wrong. What she produced in the past was the result of inspiration; she thought it was due to efficiency. She became a slave to "efficiency" and



believed that she could increase her success by converting the individual and the state into a machine. For this reason the days of Schiller and Goethe, of Kant and Beethoven are past and Germany ceases to create. All you can hear is the clank, clank of the machinery.

To be sure, Germany has taken special care of her people. In city building she has no competitor, but this policy has been a matter of expedience. Without it, the people would have revolted long ago against the tyranny of militarism and its attendant financial burden. With its militarism eliminated, however, Germany, so far as civic achievement is concerned, would be the most remarkable country in the world.

### **Germany's Accusations**

German statesmen and writers have found a particular joy in speaking of Britain and France as being decadent, while, as a matter of fact, no nation in recent years has shown greater signs of decadency than Germany. The vicissitudes of a nation are similar to those of art. Decadency in art is due to the fact that a generation of artists lose confidence in the possibilities of their own period. They study the great masters of a past epoch and try to emulate them by reducing art to a rule. They fail to see that the greatness of these old

masters was the result of their confidence in the material provided by the conditions existing in their time. They do not realize that the vital quality of enduring art is harmony between the channels through which it is expressed and the character and standard of intellect of its time, and that that intellect naturally evolves from the conditions of the period. Moreover, owing to the gradual displacement and substitution which we call progress, no two periods, and therefore the art of no two periods, can be alike.

In the Prussia of to-day we find a parallel condition. The Emperor and those responsible for her policy have not realized the potency of their own time. They have not made use of the material of the present. Germany knows the value of culture and civilization. The individual German, in his appreciation of culture and all that it implies, is no better and no worse than the individual of any other country, but his machine-made methods of thought have rendered him creatively impotent.

Germany, for some time, has been devoid of the universal character which makes for true and permanent greatness. This is very manifest in the continual cry that the world does not comprehend her or her "Kultur;" it is something apart from the rest of the world and "you must live in Germany to understand it." The

true greatness of national expression, whether in art, music, science, or literature, is that, while it retains its racial spirit, it must, by its catholicity alone, be of value to the world and be understood by all nations, races, and periods. Knowledge of time and local conditions must not be necessary.

This German weakness is very frankly, though not intentionally, admitted by Adolph Lasson, professor of philosophy in the University of Berlin, from whom the following is quoted: "A man who is not German knows nothing of Germany. We are morally and intellectually superior to all, without peers. . . In a world of wickedness we represent love, and God is with us."

This, like their other assertions, vague and floundering, shows them deficient in a sense of humor. We are told that only from Berlin can we hear the truth about the war and its causes, although, judging from the many different versions issued from Potsdam, even the Germans are not quite sure whom to blame. The war party, however, by some mental acrobatic feat, lays the blame on England.

According to Professor Lasson, even long residence in Germany does not enable one to understand her virtues and ideals; one must actually be a German. This is indeed deplorable, especially in this democratic day, this day

of equal opportunities, that one not a German must be everlastingly damned, everlastingly shut out from "intellectual superiority" and partnership with God.

One can't help believing that the German, in his egotism, really believes that the world, especially Britain, hates and is jealous of him. This idea has been inculcated by the Prussian policy. It has been almost part of the curriculum of the school children. It is because of the artificiality of this whole idea that the German flounders so hopelessly in his explanations about the war.

To see how obsessed the German is with this belief one has only to look at his war cartoons. The productions of the German cartoonist are neither artistic nor humorous; he draws a hideous figure and, despite the fact that it has no affinity to the race or type it endeavors to portray, calls it a British soldier. His achievement shows pure malice, and the humor is comparable merely to that of a small boy who puts out his tongue or makes a grimace at some one he dislikes. German writings of the last half century, the public utterances of her statesmen, and even her recent official communications regarding the present war, breathe the same spirit of intolerant racial hatred.

### Types of Pro-Germans

In the United States there are several kinds of pro-Germans. One is the avowed pro-German, worthy of respect, while another, though protesting in his numerous letters to the press that he has no prejudices in favor of Germany and that he is working solely "in the interest of peace, civilization, and neutrality," lets the cat out when he invariably signs a good old Teutonic name.

This is the type of German-American who inspires meetings held under "the auspices of the American Neutrality League, organized to promote peace between the nations." At the one held in Chicago, Dr. Jenkin Lloyd Jones, who had been appointed Chairman, found on arrival at the Coliseum that the sidewalk outside the hall was lined with men selling banners bearing the pictures of the German Kaiser, the German Eagle, and the inscription, "Deutschland ueber alles." Inside, the venerable clergyman found the hall decorated with German flags, some bearing inscriptions referring to the Franco-Prussian war of 1870. Although there were a few American flags, they were overwhelmingly outnumbered by the German emblems.

Dr. Jones, after hearing a series of pro-German and anti-British speeches, spoke with in-

dignation about the partisan spirit of the meeting and said that he attended only because he had been asked to "preside over a meeting of people whose hearts were wrung with pity for all war sufferers, regardless of national designation."

Another brand of pro-German, fortunately rare, is the type which, by its very lack of humorous appreciation, lends the most truly humorous aspect to the controversy. We hear of a movement in Washington in the cause of "peace and civilization." We hear of another in Chicago in the interest of "strict American neutrality." The methods suggested for the furthering of peace, civilization, and neutrality are the same; namely, the prohibition of the exportation of war material to Europe. We become interested in these men who for so noble a cause have travelled long distances to attend these meetings. But, lo and behold! On looking over the names of the promoters, we find a long list of German names with two or three others acutely Irish. A Jeremiah O'Leary, it seems, is at the head of this "brotherhood" movement, and, incidentally, he is trying to make America and himself believe that Ireland is hostile to the cause of England, Scotland, Wales, France, Belgium, Russia, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, India, South Africa, and Egypt, to say nothing about the

sympathetic neutral nations; and that for some reason or other she is tremendously interested in the success of Germany, Austria, and Turkey; all this in the face of the fact that 125,000 Irishmen, of whom two-thirds are Roman Catholic and one-third Protestant, have joined the colors and are still joining at the rate of 4,000 a month, and that, throughout Ireland, you can hear nothing but the fiercest denunciation of Germany.

The American of German descent is, nevertheless, acting in a perfectly human way. We should have contempt for him if he held other views than those favorable to the country of his origin. This type of Irish-American, however, is ludicrous; he is the low-comedy man of the war, funnier even than the disgruntled ex-consul Sir Roger Casement who, from Germany, is flooding the United States with his pamphlets saying unkind things about England and Englishmen. Besides drawing his pension until recently when the British government decided to suspend it, Sir Roger was obviously proud to use his title of Knighthood, an honor bestowed upon him by King George.

#### British Service Voluntary

The way the British have met the unparalleled necessities of this war will always be

remembered. The world has never before seen so magnificent an example of voluntary service. Every British soldier and sailor fighting with the Allies is doing so of his own free will. This voluntary movement, however, does not end here. Fabulous sums of money have been willingly raised out of private fortunes to meet the demands of the war. Indian Princes have placed all their wealth at the disposal of the British Government. From Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and other parts, large shiploads of men have been sent to Europe to aid the mother country. It was a voluntary action on the part of each colony and an equally voluntary action on the part of each man sent.

I have mentioned only a few of the incidents in the most comprehensive volunteer service in the history of the world. A patriotism of this order is not the result of collective thought, but is rather an individual expression. It is not the outcome of a system such as the one which teaches the Germans to "hate as one" and "to love as one." It is based on independence, on that prerogative which the Britisher reserves—the right to think for himself.

### **Germany Asks Sympathy**

Germany, with her usual inconsistency, protests because, in retaliation for her threat



to destroy all neutral vessels without regard to the safety of the crew or passengers found in the area of the British Isles, the Allies attempt to prevent commodities from entering Germany. She asks for sympathy from the neutral nations because of this attempt to starve her, a policy made necessary by her piratical threat and actions. She cries out against what she calls "this war upon non-combatants." Did Germany extend sympathy to the non-combatant men, women and children during the siege of Paris, when those who were lucky enough to live through the siege ate the very leather of their boots when the greater luxury of a rat was not procurable? Is she particularly sympathetic when unfortified English towns are shelled or when bombs are dropped on country villages, killing women and children?

### Thoroughness Her Watchword

And what distinguishes Germany in this war? Thoroughness—a thoroughness which has not been approached in the military history of the world; a wonderful system which has produced the colossal Prussian army. Efficiency has been the watchword of the Germans. They have slighted no detail and have given equal attention to the promotion of the civil affairs of a nation to enable it to

bear the financial and other burdens of so extensive a militarism.

We see an equal thoroughness in the publicity campaigns pursued by Germany in the United States. To convert public opinion, cuts and articles are sent regularly to every newspaper and public man and woman in this and other neutral countries. This propaganda even extends, to some degree, in the enemy's country. The only part of the Prussian policy lacking the usual thoroughness is her explanation of her reasons for going to war.

We find Britain, however, prosecuting this war without hymns of hatred, without humbug concerning the "sacredness of their war"; each individual has his own particular view of the conflict and its complications; there is uniformity of thought only with regard to the necessity for giving all possible assistance to their allies, and for freeing Europe from the yoke of militarism.

If this were an age solely of brute force and system, then Germany must become supreme. If Teutonic loquacity could beat down truth, then the German Ambassador at Washington alone should have achieved a great victory. The circumstantial evidence, however, is too strong against Prussia for it to be buried by German multiloquence. We could ask, why do we not hear from the

representatives at Washington of the British, the French, the Russians, the Servians, or the unfortunate Belgians, who surely have a grievance? In answer to this there is nothing more powerful to offer than the evidence already possessed by the whole world. France and her allies have nothing to explain, no unique culture or doctrine to give to the world; all they wish to do is to protect their legitimate interests and ideals—the ideals of all civilized countries outside of Germany.

**RAYMOND WYER**

**MUSKEGON, MICHIGAN**

## **CHARACTERS**

**THE KAISER**

**THE GERMAN CHANCELLOR**

**A FORMER GERMAN AMBASSADOR TO  
BRITAIN**

**TWO MESSENGER ANGELS**

# THE GOAL

ACT I

SCENE 1

(KAISER seated at his desk in conversation with the CHANCELLOR and a former German AMBASSADOR to Britain. Both are standing.)

KAISER: The Prussian Empire must be supreme, and Britain is the obstacle.

AMBASSADOR: Your Imperial Majesty is well aware that Germany leads the world in science, literature, art, and music; we are commercially supreme; and German culture has never been equalled. Your Majesty's ambitions have been realized.

KAISER (*showing anger*): You fool! Do you know what you say? Are we supreme in the possession of territory?

AMBASSADOR: No, Sire, but—

KAISER: That is the point.

AMBASSADOR: But we are the greatest—

KAISER: We cannot be a great empire unless we expand; we cannot be the greatest

empire while Britain holds all her colonies.

AMBASSADOR: But does national greatness depend upon this, Sire?

KAISER: I am fully aware of all that Prussia has done, but in saying that my ambitions have been realized you admit ignorance of German aspiration.

AMBASSADOR: I ask your pardon, Sire. My ignorance is probably due to my long residence in London.

KAISER: How can you speak of your Emperor as having fulfilled his destiny when Britain holds dominion in all parts of the world? How can any German who loves the Fatherland be satisfied when the British still boast that they rule the waves?

AMBASSADOR (*conciliatingly*): That is only a figure of speech, Sire. It is generally conceded that the British navy has done no more than protect its shipping and possessions. Their merchant service has been the natural development of a nation dependent upon its colonies and other lands for food. The navy has grown with the merchant marine in order to protect it, but,

except as a legitimate expediency in war time, it has never been used to interfere with any nation's freedom of the sea.

**KAISER:** Is it not through the tyranny of the British navy that she possesses so much territory?

**AMBASSADOR:** Your Imperial Majesty, I think that Britain's success as a colonizer has been due to a peculiar adaptability to the temperaments or national characteristics of the various races under her protection.

**KAISER:** Then you do not believe it is due to her navalism that England is able to hold these possessions?

**AMBASSADOR:** I think, Sire, the combined naval and military strength of Britain would not be sufficient to hold her wide empire together without the general consent of her colonies and dependencies.

**KAISER (*rising*):** I do not agree with you. It can be by force only that this nation of opportunists has become possessed of so much. I have little faith in your theory of adaptability. It is not the conqueror but the conquered who must be adaptable.

**AMBASSADOR:** Your Imperial Majesty could not have a better example to prove my contention than South Africa. The result of the war in that country is a circumstance which has no parallel in the history of the world. But a very few years ago the Boers were fighting the British, and it was only after months of war, against almost the entire British army, that the Boers laid down their arms. I believe that now, even after so short a time, England, though she should be embroiled in an European war, has little danger of a serious rebellion in South Africa.

**CHANCELLOR** (*insinuatingly*): We have a little plan which I think will change your opinion of the loyalty of the Boers.

**KAISER** (*to Ambassador*): Well, what reason do you give for this remarkable loyalty?

**AMBASSADOR:** The British, Sire, as soon as they conquered the Boers, gave them freedom greater than they had under President Kruger. They were given the highest official places in South Africa, and, as is her custom, England respected the temper-



ament and encouraged the characteristics of the people. This, I believe, is the secret, Sire.

CHANCELLOR: That is impossible. It may be correct in theory, but not in practice.

AMBASSADOR: But it has been proved—

CHANCELLOR: Force, I maintain, is the only way to hold a subjugated people. Especially is this true of a nation which has no standard of efficiency. The British Empire has been built up in a haphazard way. As to the foolish boast of the English that they rule the waves, this is not as true as it was, thanks to German genius. I fully realize, however, that in the eyes of the world this make-believe British Empire stands in the way of a complete justification of our Prussian efficiency. We have repeatedly spoken of the Austrian affair as a means of settling this account. I have a plan, Sire.

KAISER: Well, what is your suggestion, Chancellor?

CHANCELLOR: Austria is delivering an ultimatum to Belgrade and will require an

answer in forty-eight hours. First, we must induce Britain to remain neutral. After we have disposed of France and Russia, according to the plans I outlined to your Imperial Majesty recently, we shall be free to settle with our dear cousins.

KAISER: Ha! Ha! That's good. But how do you propose to keep England out.

CHANCELLOR: By promising her that we will not touch Holland and will take from France nothing but her colonies, Sire.

KAISER (*warningly*): Remember, Chancellor, you misjudged these Belgians. You were confident that they could be frightened into consenting to our army's going through their territory; yet there are signs that Belgium will resist an invasion. Do you really believe that Britain can be induced by such a promise? Is it not possible that she may see our motive?

CHANCELLOR: I think not, but even if she should, England never fights unless she has the advantage. History tells us this. Then, she has her hands full with Ireland; and in addition, the present government

has shown itself opposed to war and has persistently discouraged all attempts of the opposition to increase naval and military expenditure.

KAISER: May not her jealousy of German success outweigh her discretion?

CHANCELLOR: Of course, to be unable to take us at a disadvantage will naturally be most exasperating to England, Sire. But I think we need not fear; for their miserable little army, the result of persistent recruiting, is evidence of the Englishman's distaste for fighting his country's battles.

KAISER: I hope that you may be right, Chancellor, but what about the neutral powers? We have to consider the world's opinion, especially that of the United States. I presume that we can depend upon their large German population for support, but what would be the general feeling if Britain came in to protect Belgium?

CHANCELLOR (*hesitatingly*): Of course, we must remember, Sire, that most of the Germans left the Fatherland to avoid ser-

vice in the German army and to enjoy the constitutional freedom of the United States.

**KAISER:** Then you are not sure?

**CHANCELLOR:** For some time, Sire, I have been uncertain as to what their attitude would be, because our enemies will make the excuse that they are fighting to destroy this very system which led so many Germans to leave their Fatherland. I think, however, that the law we prudently passed a year ago permitting these German-Americans to retain their status of German citizens will have results. This, combined with an active propaganda by our representative at Washington, who is a most efficient man, gives me hope of gaining much sympathy for the cause of German culture. Besides, the duplicity of Britain is known only too well and it will not be difficult to make the neutral nations understand that Britain's jealousy of German success is at the bottom of the war,—that she has been preparing for it and that the violation of Belgian neutrality is a paltry pretext.

AMBASSADOR: Your Imperial Majesty, it may be difficult to convince the nations of the truth of this, because it is well-known, as the Chancellor has already said, that the Radical party which has dominated in England for years has always been opposed to war and has been most persistent in fighting all attempts to increase military or naval expenditure. As a matter of fact, it has constantly ignored the Tory warning of the significance of our system of espionage. The Radicals believe that it is merely a trick on the part of the military caste to frighten the government into spending more money on the army and navy. These facts, I am afraid, Sire, besides being incontrovertible, are universally known and may cause some difficulty.

CHANCELLOR (*impatiently*): I do not agree with you. Besides, English jealousy of the Germans is too well-known.

KAISER (*to the Ambassador*): Is that correct?

AMBASSADOR: Your Imperial Majesty, I cannot say that I saw much evidence of jealousy. The Englishman is very satisfied

that he is English. His attitude is more one of sympathy for those who do not share this privilege. I do not think that there is a nation or an individual less jealous or more complacently satisfied than England or the average Englishman.

KAISER: You speak almost like an Englishman. But surely it is a well-known fact that they hate the Germans?

AMBASSADOR: I think that you have been misinformed, Sire.

KAISER: I thought that it was common knowledge.

AMBASSADOR: No, Sire, the only complaint I have heard against the Germans is that they come to England and work for half the wages that an Englishman demands.

KAISER (*decisively*): Well, if Britain does not hate us and is not jealous of our superiority, her very contentment is further proof of her decadence. England is no longer virile. She has become apathetic. With France and the rest of the world, she is sinking into degeneracy and is doomed to the fate of all such nations.

CHANCELLOR: Yes, Sire, the weak must give way to the strong.

KAISER: Enervated races cannot be permitted to stand in the way of our expansion. The overpowering intellect and industrial genius of Germany is for the benefit of all. Their subjugation is advantageous not only to us but to themselves; for, by becoming as we are, they share in the greatest blessing the world has known,—Prussian Kultur.

CHANCELLOR: Your Imperial Majesty speaks rightly.

KAISER: What are we doing to accomplish this great work?

CHANCELLOR: Ninety thousand men are working in the Krupp factory day and night. Our army is perfect and equal to the armies of Britain, France, and Russia combined. Our military organization will stagger the world; but we must strike now or it will be too late!

KAISER: Why too late?

CHANCELLOR: Because, Sire, we have taxed the people to the breaking point, and the socialists are becoming troublesome. We

must justify the financial strain which the German people have been under for years. The situation has now become acute. The only money it is possible to raise is in the form of a war loan. Therefore, if we delay, our power will deteriorate.

KAISER: If the socialists should oppose the war and the war loan, what then?

CHANCELLOR: They know too well the consequences of such conduct. They would be immediately ordered to the front. Then, when victory comes to us, all will be well; for the system will have triumphed and the socialists who survive will be few.

KAISER: But if we lose?

CHANCELLOR (*tensely*): Then God save us from these few!

KAISER: We must win! It is God's will.

CHANCELLOR: Yes, Sire, and our latest guns are invincible.

KAISER: Well, go on with this work, and remember, keep the big guns for the English! Whether Britain comes in on behalf of Belgium or not, it is she who has stood in the way of our expansion and the world's



participation in the benefits of German culture. We must bear in mind that any territory we keep in Europe is already congested. Therefore, we must look farther afield. In Canada we would find an admirable country for our surplus population. Then, after Canada,—well, who knows!

CHANCELLOR: I understand you, Sire.

KAISER: I repeat, keep the big guns for the English! The Prussians must be taught more now than ever that the British are our enemies and that they are responsible for this war. Hatred must be fostered by song, poetry, and prose until it becomes second nature to every Prussian to hate the very word *English*. Tell them that London is our goal! And, Chancellor, what a goal! (*A slight pause, then very earnestly*): The possibilities are wonderful. Sometimes I am staggered by the very thought of them. Leave me! I must think alone.

(*Chancellor and Ambassador withdraw. Kaiser seats himself and is deep in thought as the curtain drops.*)

## ACT II

Several months later. Scene same as Act I.

KAISER *seated*. ANGEL OF DEATH *appears*.

KAISER: Who are you?

ANGEL: The Angel of Death.

KAISER: What do you want?

ANGEL: I am sent for the Emperor William.

KAISER (*taken aback*): You must be mistaken. I am in the midst of a great work. I am spreading culture, civilizing the world. God is with me.

ANGEL: Add not blasphemy to stupidity! Your work is finished!

(ANGEL *touches him and departs as Kaiser drops forward. KAISER starts up and looks strangely around as another ANGEL approaches.*)

KAISER: Who are you?

ANGEL: An Angel from Heaven.

KAISER: What do you want?

ANGEL: The Emperor William.

KAISER: What do you want with me?

ANGEL: I have been sent for you; you must accompany me.

KAISER: But where?

ANGEL: To Purgatory.

KAISER (*surprised*): To Purgatory? But why? Are Caesar and Napoleon there?

ANGEL: No, in Hell.

KAISER: Why am I not to be with them?

ANGEL: Because you are not of them.

KAISER: But that is impossible. What did Napoleon do that I have not done? Have not more men fallen in my war than in all of Napoleon's campaigns? Have we not made every man, woman, and child fear us? Is not all Belgium starving? I take credit for whatever happens even after my death; for it was my idea. My people, rich and poor, because they had faith in the value of our civilization, willingly subscribed to the building up of a military power necessary to spread our culture, even as the crusaders of old did when spreading their glorious message.

ANGEL: Yes, all you say is true, but still you may not be ranked with Caesar and Napoleon.

KAISER: But why not?

ANGEL: Because Casear and Napoleon were great men and greatly wicked. You are neither. They put their superior intelligence to a wicked use. You looked back at warriors and heroes of a past time and tried to be like them.

KAISER: Am I not like them?

ANGEL: No, you had all the attributes of greatness except greatness. You were merely stupid and vain-glorious. You were ambitious to create a world empire, and you thought that you could accomplish it by crushing the national pride and character of other races.

KAISER: I have repeatedly said that in our morale, in our industry, in our conscience, in our standard of efficiency, Germany has something to give to the world. It is not merely for the sake of fighting that we went to war. Have I not kept the peace for forty-four years?

**ANGEL:** Yes, verily you have and the restraint for this length of time over your propensity for raiding your neighbors' territory would seem worthy of much commendation, if it were not for the fact that during this time you have made preparations for war,—preparations without parallel in the history of the world. I fear this gives you a reputation as a military leader rather than as an apostle of peace.

**KAISER:** I contend it was necessary for the good of the world. Even the military organization which our culture has evolved must be to the universe a justification of our efficiency.

**ANGEL:** You have spoken vaguely of German culture. It is a machine-made culture that knows no innate human kindness, a culture which the world has repudiated, moreover. You have added to your lack of discrimination the folly of thinking that you had divine approval in attempting to force this system on the world with your Krupp guns. You must go with others who, like you, were not really crim-